

REGISTERED NURSES



Have you heard about the nursing shortage? According to the U.S. Department of Labor, more new registered nurse (RN) positions will be created from 2002-2012 than in any other occupation. In Utah, there are a projected 1,150 job openings for RNs annually. Growth in healthcare, an aging population, and the need to replace nurses leaving the profession will fuel demand for many years to come. If you enjoy working with people, gaining medical knowledge, and have good communication and decision-making skills, a career as a registered nurse could be right for you.

RNs work in a variety of settings. Although about two-thirds of RNs work in hospitals, they can also be found in physicians' offices, clinics, surgical centers, long-term care facilities, schools, government agencies, and other places. While their exact duties vary according

to the setting, RNs are called on to do medical assessment, provide ordered treatments, give medications, and provide support to patients and their families. RNs provide compassionate care with an understanding of the science behind the medical issues they are treating.

The work can be stressful and challenging, and the ability to remain calm and work well with others is critical. RNs must also be well organized, observant and consistently able to provide safe, competent care. One of the RN's most important roles is that of a teacher—both for patients learning to manage illness and those trying to prevent illness.

This occupation also offers a variety of schedules. Many nursing jobs are shift work, from around-the-clock in a hospital to 9-5 in a clinic. According

to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about one-quarter of registered nurses actually work part-time.


In order to become a registered nurse, you must graduate from an accredited nursing program and pass a state licensing exam. In Utah, you can train to be an RN by earning an associate or bachelor's degree. Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) programs take about four years to complete, and are offered by colleges and universities.

Associate degree programs are offered by community colleges, and usually

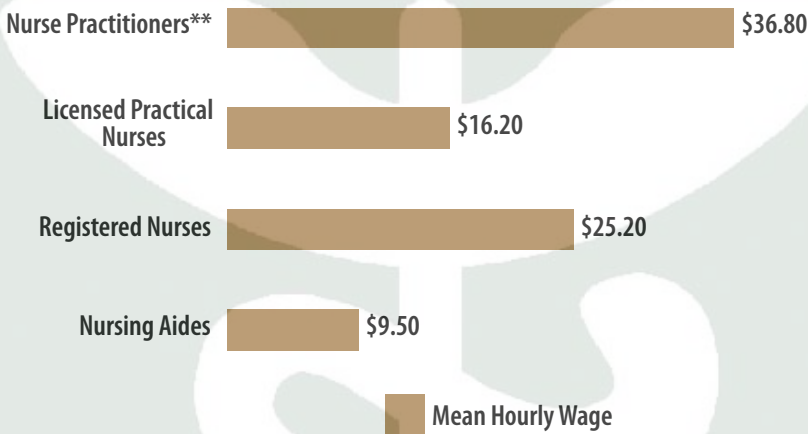
take about two to three years to complete. RN-BS programs allow RNs with an associate degree to earn a bachelor's degree, preparing them for a broader scope of practice and further advancement in the field. A bachelor's degree is usually necessary to engage in research or enroll in master's degree programs.

While job opportunities for RNs in all specialties are expected to be excellent, the number of RN jobs in nursing care facilities is expected to grow fastest because of increases in the number of elderly, many of whom require long-

term care. Job growth also is expected in units that provide specialized long-term rehabilitation for stroke and head injury patients, as well as units that treat Alzheimer's victims.

Jobs for RNs are not only plentiful, but also pay well. According to the Utah Department of Workforce Services, registered nurses earn an average of \$25.20 per hour statewide and \$26.10 in the Salt Lake City area. Because of the high number of job openings and high wages, the Utah Department of Workforce Services lists nursing as a 5-star occupation. 

Nursing occupations and wages



**2005 National Salary Survey of Nurse Practitioners
Source: Utah Dept. of Workforce Services

Are you interested in a career as a registered nurse? Check out our web site at www.careers.utah.gov for more information.